DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 216 741 JC 820 244

AUTHOR Brown, Grace Carolyn
TITLE Part-Time Faculty Effectiveness: Fulfilling the Need.
PUB DATE Mar 82
NOTE 7p.; Paper presented at the National Policy Conference on Urban Community Colleges in Transition (Detroit, MI, March 1982).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS College Administration; *College Faculty; Community Colleges; Educational Change; Employment Practices; Faculty College Relationship; *Faculty Development; *Part Time Faculty; *Personnel Policy; Policy Formation; Program Descriptions; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS *Cuyahoga Community College Cleveland OH

ABSTRACT

Part-time instructors currently make up 51% of the community college faculty and their numbers will undoubtedly increase in the next decade, especially in high technology areas. This growth, along with changes in community college missions and increasing fiscal stringency, raises critical policy issues for college leaders. These policy issues concern types of instructional programming; quality and academic standards; legal rights, seniority, and tenure; staff and resource development; and financial reimbursement for "equal work." Since part-time faculty will be the first to be affected by institutional changes reflective of new technology or new priorities, it is imperative that educational institutions implement systematic strategic plans and coherent processes for the effective utilization of part-time faculty. In addition, mechanisms will be required for dealing with part-time faculty in terms of initial employment, contract processes, orientation, staff development, support services, instructional assistance, and performance evaluation. At Cuyahoga Community College attempts are being made to address these concerns through the clarification of the relationship between faculty members and the college; the development of a Faculty Resource Center where teachers can obtain instructional support materials and services; and the implementation of a Professional Development Grants Program to assist faculty in pursuing projects that will improve instructional techniques and strategies. (HB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED216741

PART-TIME FACULTY EFFECTIVENESS: FULFILLING THE NEED

Presented by

Dr. Grace Carolyn Brown
Vice President for Educational Planning and Development
Cuyahoga Community College
Cleveland, Ohio

to

National Policy Conference: Urban Community Colleges in Transition
Detroit, Michigan

March, 1982

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Dr. Grace C. Brown

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

JC 820 244

PART-TIME FACULTY EFFECTIVENESS: FULFILLING THE NEED

Nature of the Problem

The last decade has seen a dramatic growth in the use of part-time faculty members in higher education. The National Center for Education Statistics indicates that part-time faculty now comprise thirty-two percent of the total teaching force in higher education. Between the years 1972 and 1977, the rate of part-time faculty growth was fifty percent, while only nine percent for full-time teachers. Currently, the use of part-time teachers is more common in the two-year community colleges where part-time teachers make up fifty-one percent of the entire faculty. This figure contrasts with the faculty make-up of the four-year liberal arts colleges which is approximately twenty-four percent part-time. At research universities, part-timers account for only about twenty percent of the faculty.

Pragmatically, any reasonable discussion of part-time faculty effectiveness must begin with a brief review of community colleges, America's unique approach to higher education which has developed from being everything to everyone to being the best educational hope for men and women seeking post-secondary training. The mileau in which community colleges will exist over the next two decades would appear to be one in which the economy, new needs, and the burgeoning technology of education must be reconsidered.

In the sixties and most of the seventies, the literature was replete with descriptions of the community college student: the New Student, the Non-Traditional, the aging student, the Lifelong Learner, and the Part-Time student were descriptive of those enrolled in the community college. During this period, access and opportunity for all who wished to learn was the credo of most community colleges. A proliferation of courses in remediation accompanied a new awareness of our population. English as a second language, typically geared toward first generation European has now come to include Asian languages and those of many other Third World countries.

The question of effectiveness in teaching and learning in non-degree academic areas such as foreign languages and cultures, in highly specialized technical areas, and in non-credit and evening and weekend section has historically been positioned as the bailiwick of part-time instructors. In fact, most areas below the associate degree and certainly in areas that we, as academic administrators considered specialized, were offered by the part-time ranks of our faculty.

In the past, non-credit courses in community service programs and recreation courses were expected to be offered at the community college at a bargain rate or least considerably lower than those offered at four-year institutions and universities. As we see a change in the nature of community service to a more vocational bend and toward the policy of recognizing the needs of the full-time worker, our understanding of "non-credit" programming and its faculty will change.

The Policy Issues

Since the late seventies, our thinking about the community college student, new educational needs and the technology of education has begun to change. Interestingly enough this change has occurred as the part-time faculty have begun to pose critical policy issues and ask questions of college leadership. These policy issues concern (1) types of instructional programming; (2) quality and academic standards in the entire instructional program; (3) legal rights, seniority and tenure; (4) staff and resource development, and (5) financial reimbursement for "equal work."

Clark Kerr, in Three Thousand Futures: The Next Twenty Years for Higher Education, states "that there is much that should be done, and much that could be accomplished as we look at the year 2000. In order to maximize these achievements Clark Kerr points out that hard choices are going to have to be made. These hard choices are related to the questions of access and academic excellence in our institutional programs; issues of standards and individual rights; tightening fiscal resources and developing community needs and demands, and more critically than ever before, the future needs of business and industry which can be met in many instances by credentialed technical specialists.

One of the most significant concerns for all institutions of higher education is leadership. It is clear that what can and will be done, whether in the maintenance of excellence and the open door, cost-effectiveness on the one hand and standards on the other or in meeting new needs depends upon the individual college and the professionals that are in those institutions who will be the ones to make a real difference about the future.

As community colleges change to meet new needs and as the policy issues and questions become more complex or more immediate, the effectiveness of our institutions and our professional staff will need to be reexamined. The change toward effectiveness and change reflective of new technology and new or different needs will be noted first in the part-time faculty ranks of our professional staff. It is imperative therefore that institutions of higher education implement systematic strategic plans and coherent processes for the effective utilization of part-time faculty. In addition to an institutional plan there needs to be an institutional commitment for dealing with part-time faculty in terms of initial employment, contract process, orientation, staff development, support services, instructional assistance, media services, and performance evaluation.

Clearly, the part-time faculty constituency is changing and should change. Serious institutional and professional attention to part-time faculty effectiveness is long overdue. This issue, however, like other areas of higher education now due for reform, necessitates a focus on quality control review and institutional change. The issues that we are going to be subjected to are based upon the fact that we are, indeed, in most institutions now in a declining fiscal state and have adversial constituent relationships to deal with. It is in the context of the local and national economy and our institutional structures that we will be looking at the question of academic excellence and access. These institutional issues, in all components including effectiveness of part-time faculty, will need assessment within that context.

The state-of-the-art regarding the effective utilization of part-time faculty is, at best, ad hoc in most colleges and universities. There may be some differences between community colleges and four-year colleges and universities, but the utilization of part-time faculty will continue to be, and I suspect it is now, an arrangement that is more a casual departmental affair than it is a planned institutional effort. The departmental level at which the part-time faculty issues are being addressed or will likely be addressed will continue at a lowest level because academic administrators have yet to recognize that part-time faculty issues are a priority matter or that the nature of problems is sufficiently grave to take on as a whole question within an institutional framework.

Adhocracy is one danger, exploitation may be another. Enlightened and sensitive leadership, both inside and outside of academe, will be required if the part-time faculty is to be kept from exploitation. Exploitation can occur when the budget or the student/faculty ratio standard is pressed without adequate regard to finding qualified faculty. Part-time faculty choices then can be subject to whims and fancies of a good many different organizations, many of which will have motives totally separate from issues of quality education and concerns about the quality of teaching and learning that is going on in the classrooms today. Changes when approached in a systematic planned way can lead to manageable standards and insure equity.

Addressing the Issues

The question is how will we, as professionals, address the issues? Better still, who will shape the issues and how will they be shaped?

As I stated earlier, a number of explanations have been offered as to why there are more part-time employees at community colleges and specifically what their responsibilities could be. I suggest that community colleges are mandated to respond quickly to the changing needs of their local communities and that part-time employees are often viewed as essential to being able to carry out such a mandate. Four-year and graduate level institutions are structured in a different response pattern to needs in local communities or states, or even in the country as a whole. These institutions are much more apt to take a long-term view of changes in academic programs and influence policy.

I would advise as well that before an institution decides to hire part-time faculty, it would be well to review other ways to meet new needs. For instance, the institution would be wise to explore using full-time faculty more productively or investigate the uses of educational technology. But, once a decision has been made to use part-time faculty, careful thought should be given to performance expectations, determination of qualifications which may not have links with educational credentials, and the level of commitment in terms of time, i.e., one quarter, a few weeks or an academic year, that the College wishes to extend.

At Cuyahoga Community College, only after the job description and the qualifications for the part-time position are developed does the recruitment of part-time employees begin. We are fairly definite from the beginning about what the relationship or commitment between the part-time employee and the institution will be. That relationship is a critical issue. Too often there is a vagueness, a kind of grayness, about what the relationship is meant to be.

When a person applies for a part-time job, they must know what that job is, and how it fits into the institution's plans. Otherwise, and depending on what the individual's own needs are, the job candidate may read into a job offer certain commitments by the institution that actually are not there. We must be explicit about what the institution intends and needs. The administration must avoid by implication or evaluation during the part-time person's tenure the issue of continuation. This will prevent building up an expectancy of continued employment.

Administrators responsible for part-time faculty need to understand the sources of the legal rights of part-time employees at an institution. Generally speaking, there may be said to be three sources of employment rights: (1) contracts, including policies and procedures of governing boards and institutional handbooks; (2) state and local statues; and (3) institutional customs and practices. Lack of understanding may place the institution in jeopardy and create ill-will in the academic community.

Equally important, in my view, are issues of staff development. Staff development provided for part-time faculty results in as many benefits for the institution as it does for the part-time employee. A part-time faculty member who is aware of and participates in various campus developmental activities or programs and support services will, in most cases, function more effectively as a classroom instructor.

At Cuyahoga Community College, we have established a Faculty Resource Center for all faculty to obtain instructional support materials and services (i.e., instructional course outlines, professional journals and magazines, and assistance with special students). The Center provides an area for faculty to meet with colleagues, hold individual student conferences, or utilize one of the work stations as a faculty office. Clerical service in the Center assists part-time faculty in communicating with other departments of the College, a service critical to the evening part-time faculty. Mail boxes for each part-time instructor are maintained in the Evening/Weekend Office, and part-time instructors regularly receive College communications, newsletters, and announcements that the full-time faculty receive.

I am particularly proud of the staff development opportunities available to the part-time faculty through Cuyahoga Community College's Professional Development Grants Program. This program provides a small amount of funding for both full-time and part-time faculty to pursue projects that improve classroom instruction and the teaching/learning process through the development, implementation, and evaluation of alternate teaching techniques, strategies, and support systems. This program represents a unique and genuine commitment by Cuyahoga Community College to meet the needs of part-time faculty and to reinforce their feelings of being part of the College professional staff.

Part-time faculty are expected to maintain high standards of instruction in the classroom, thus ensuring that students receive a quality education which is part of the overall commitment to academic excellence. Each part-time faculty member is evaluated by a full-time faculty member during the initial quarter of employment and regularly each quarter of instructional assignment.

An institution that has made a genuine commitment to part-time faculty through the implementation of well-planned programs and activities with coordinated support services, such as Cuyahoga Community College has done, will nurture their part-time faculty as an invaluable resource.

Summary

In summary, I suggest that part-time faculty members will undoubtedly increase in numbers over the decade ahead. They will be seen in increasing numbers in specialized areas of high technology and job skill areas where special skills are required. The part-time faculty contract cannot be left only at the department level, or at the first hiring level within the institution. It seems to me that there are some institutional responsibilities that have to be maintained and I would trust that the kind of responsibilities that Cuyahoga Community College has recognized and identified are those that can be shared by other institutions. We believe that there are requirements for successful part-time faculty performance. All institutions need to have clear policy statements from the governing authority with respect to part-time professional staff and all adjunct staff. The responsibilities must be clearly outlined and the remuneration considered fair and equitable in the marketplace to the degree that it represents pay for the actual work performed both in the context of load and professional responsibility. Clear policy statements of responsibility are clearly demanded for the future in this area. Clearly structured procedures for policy implementation, with responsibility statements for administrative, as well as management support within the institution, are also necessary adjuncts to these stated policies backed up by clear procedures.

An institutional planning framework and strategy commitment has to exist if we are ever going to deal properly with the part-time faculty person. One planning and strategy commitment that works has to do with identification of more participative mechanisms for part-timers. That is, if we are sincere about nurturing and supporting that portion of our faculty who play a significant and increasingly more important role in our institution, those participative mechanisms ought to be clear with respect to how they participate in the decision making processes of the institution. And if not at a decision making level, those processes that affect the way work is carried out within the instituional environment must be clear. The selection, evaluation and professional development of parttime faculty, therefore, must become part of institutions' strategic planning. More formal and professional means will become necessary to fully utilize professionals and specialists to teach part-time. They no longer fill a gap; they fulfill a need.

JUN 25 1982

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGES
96 POWELL LIBRARY BUILDING
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90024
EE 36